



NO. 44 August 1968





The Gateway to Little Menlo

His Master's Voice Instruments

The Auxeto-Gramophone

THIS most marvellous development of 'His Master's Voice,' the Auxeto-phone, is the invention of the Hon. Charles Parsons, the world-famous inventor of the steam turbine. The Auxeto, by means of a special air pressure appliance, adds much breadth and volume to the sound, while preserving and even increasing its purity of tone, that it becomes capable of filling the largest concert hall. This is no mere figure of speech, for at a Concert in the Royal Albert Hall, in December, 1906, and at the great Empire Concert at the Crystal Palace, on May 12, 1911, to mention but two historical occasions, before people estimated at 10,000 and 40,000 respectively, from top to bottom of these vast buildings a number of vocal and instrumental selections were heard played by the Auxeto as clearly as if the actual singers and musicians were present before them. Writing of this Concert at the Albert Hall, the "DAILY MAIL," says: "Many ladies were visibly affected when Madame Patti, or rather the Gramophone, sang 'Home, Sweet Home.' The rendering recalled in a startling manner her singing at the same Hall on the occasion of her farewell concert a few years ago."

Wherever a large volume of sound is required—in concert halls, on yachts, at garden parties and elsewhere in the open air—no instrument can rival the Auxeto, while its decorative appearance in Mahogany would grace its surroundings anywhere.



HIS MASTER'S VOICE

Specification.

CABINET: Mahogany model as illustrated, handsomely panelled in chaste design; large spun brass horn.

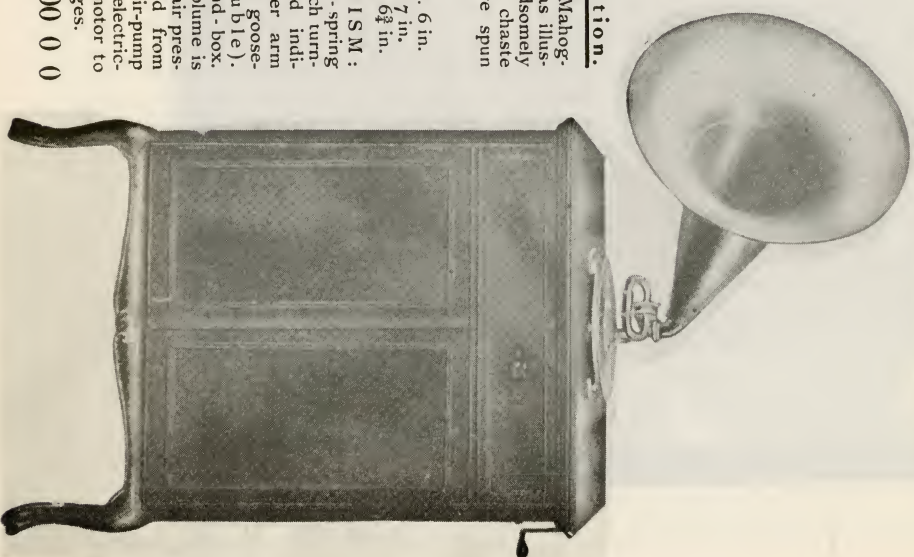
Size:

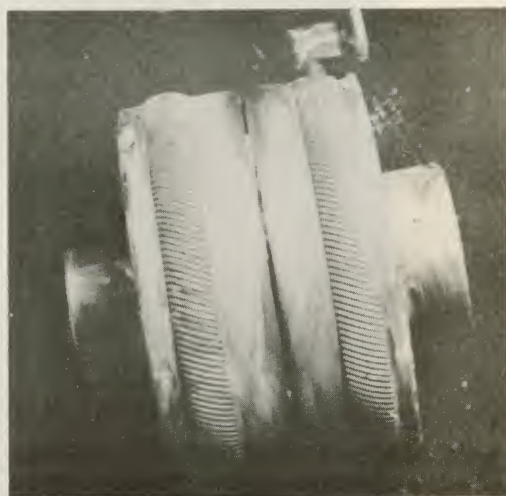
Height, 3 ft. 6 in.
Width, 2 ft. 7 in.
Depth, 1 ft. 6½ in.

MECHANISM:

Latest triple-spring motor, 12-inch turntable. Speed indicator. Taper arm with patent goose-neck (double). Special sound-box. Wonderful volume is obtained by air pressure supplied from the special air-pump worked by electrically-driven motor to suit all voltages.

Price £100 0 0







LITTLE MENLO

Early Experiences in the Phonograph Industry

by Charles S. Cox

As related to George Frow

Introduction by George Frow.

At our Society's Exhibition in the City of London in August, 1967, an elderly gentleman introduced himself to me as Charles Cox, and from what he told me and from the photographs he carried with him, I soon realised that here was someone who had moved among the pioneers of both the Phonographic and Aeronautical Industry and that his experiences of seventy years ago shed a great light for those of us who today are trying to fill in gaps and verify facts.

Mr. Cox and his charming wife have lived a long time, in fact it is five years since they celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary, and as a young man in his teens he was fortunate to be in a position to meet many famous personalities of the nineties and particularly to come within the influence and employ of Colonel George Edward Gouraud. Colonel Gouraud had come to Britain in the late 1860's and in 1877 bought a house at Upper Norwood. Later when he became Edison's principal phonograph agent in this country he named the house "Little Menlo" and numbered among his friends not only royalty but the leading figures of science and the arts.

It is the days after Little Menlo that Mr. Cox recalls so vividly when Colonel Gouraud financed a laboratory for the investigation of the compressed air sound-magnifier gramophone. This was the Auxetophone or Auxeto-Gramophone, the invention of Horace Short, who with his two brothers had formed a small firm for manufacturing aeronautical balloons, and is part of a story hitherto neglected by gramophone historians.

We are indeed grateful and fortunate in having this gap filled from first hand experiences, and illustrated by photographs in his possession and from Society sources.

Mr. Cox took us to task in a kindly way for ascribing the invention of compressed air reproduction to Sir Charles Parsons, when so much of the early work had been done by his friend Horace Short, financed by Colonel Gouraud. Let Mr. Cox tell the story in his own words

I was born in 1881, and in the 1890's was employed at the Savoy Hotel in London to look after the telephone, no switchboard even, and naturally I came into contact with the hotel visitors and remember many of them. There was Sir Arthur Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte, both connected with the Gilbert and Sullivan operas at the Savoy Theatre next door. Another regular visitor was Lord Francis Hope, brother of the Duke of Newcastle for whom I carried billets-doux to Miss May Yohe, at the Avenue Theatre in Northumberland Avenue. May Yohe, an American, was the early singer of coon songs and when she married Lord Francis Hope he gave her the famous "Hope" Diamond, a family heirloom, reputed to bring bad luck to whoever owned it. May Yohe later died in poverty. I well remember too the Prince of Wales, Later King Edward VII, a regular diner at the Savoy with Lily Langtry (Lady de Bathe).

One day at the Savoy I was approached by Colonel Gouraud whom I had known for some time; he said that he had been watching me and that I looked a bright lad and he invited me to his house at Palace Gardens, Kensington.

It seemed that some time previously he had been introduced to Horace Short

and had decided to finance the compressed-air valve which short had invented, I believe the instrument had been registered with the Patent Office before 1899.

Horace Short was an absolute genius, who had a large head and a big brain. At sixteen he gave a lecture at the College of Science at South Kensington on vacuums and valves but he soon travelled abroad extensively. He told me many stories of his adventures, including being captured by cannibals in the Samoa Islands, and by the age of twenty was managing a silver mine in Mexico. He was a dominant character and was made of the stuff of Empire Builders.

Meanwhile Colonel Gouraud had rented a small workshop in Grey Street, Blackfriars, in the City of London, but so many local residents complained of the noise of the compressed air experiments that we moved to the Devil's Dyke, right on top of the South Downs, outside Brighton, from where we could see the Crystal Palace, about fifty miles away.

By this time Horace Short's brothers, Eustace and Oswald had brought him home from Mexico in 1898 and in that year they founded their business of Short Brothers, Balloon Manufacturers. I joined them as an apprentice in 1899 and was present when they built their first balloon. Later Gouraud vacated the South Downs and moved to a workshop at Hove near the railway station, and which the Colonel named "Menlo Laboratory" after Edison's laboratory at New Jersey. About eight of us were employed, including the Short Brothers, and there was also a sheet metal worker to make the large horns, etc. I well remember being sent up to Clerkenwell to a watchmaker with patterns for the first sound-box combs. These were machined out of vegetable ivory, a sort of hard nut.

In 1902 Colonel Gouraud closed the Laboratory at Hove, having spent enough money. He said at the time, "Now we have the Auxetophone, we have to make it pay for itself." Two of the Shorts, Eustace and Oswald, concentrated on the Balloon factory full-time, while Horace went to Newcastle to work with Charles Parsons on improvements to the steam turbine, taking his Auxetophone to the Parsons Laboratory and later Parsons disposed of it to the Gramophone & Typewriter Company.

In due course the Short Brothers were building flying machines; enhancing their reputation by constructing the machine in which Lord Brabazon won the 'Daily Mail' prize in 1908 and gained the first Pilot's Certificate A.1. In 1909 they were recommended by Griffith Brewer, a pioneer aeronaut, to the Royal Aero Club for building six flying machines for the Wright Brothers, then in England. Later they designed the first seaplane and flying boat. This ultimately led to their great aircraft factory which did so much to develop commercial flying in the Empire between the wars, using flying boats. Later they made Sunderland flying boats and Stirling bombers during World War II.

I worked closely with Colonel Gouraud and knew him and his family well. He was born probably in the late 1830's at Niagara Falls and served in the Union Army in the American Civil War, on General Sherman's staff, and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour. He told me he met Edison during the War, when the latter was a telegraph operator; Gouraud was sent to check on the telegraph system and found that Edison had set up an automatic repeating device and had gone to sleep in the corner of the hut; in due course the two became friends. Gouraud was well off and spent a great deal of money, and his wife's too, on lavish entertaining and financing these inventions, and when I last heard of him during the 1900's, he was living quietly in a small house at Brighton.

He was a great Anglophile and during the South African War, in which his eldest son served in the 17th. Lancers, he decided to raise money for the Soldiers and Sailors and their families. A side drum was borrowed from the Coldstream Guards and he had the sheet metal worker at Hove make a quantity of drums to this pattern. Oswald Short painted and decorated them to match the original, and a slot was made in the top to collect money.

Colonel Gouraud knew Rudyard Kipling, whose "Absent Minded Beggar" was then being sung all over the country for the same cause, and Kipling agreed to write suitable verse to paste on the body of the drum. I had the pleasure of going to "The Elms" at Rottingdean, near Brighton where Kipling then lived and I met him in the library where he gave me the following verse, which as far as I know has never been published:-

"Beat the Drum, Beat the Drum,
With the coin you've got to spare,
That our braves at the front the better may fare;
Beat the Drum, Beat the Drum,
Till its echo resounds
Wherever Queen's khaki in battle is found.
Beat, beat, beat, with a patriotic heat
Till new laurels we lay at Victoria's feet.
God save the Queen."

Colonel Gouraud also recorded a cylinder message to Baden Powell in South Africa congratulating him on his wonderful achievement. (See our illustration). At the end of the message he included the following verse:-

"The Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes,
For their honour we gladly die,
One God, One Blood, Two Flags,
Long may they wave on high.
God save the Queen."

It was decided at the end of this message to insert the roaring of lions to give it extra patriotic flavour, and we set up the machine at the newly-opened London Hippodrome where a pride of lions was performing. I also remember that appearing there at the time were the Eight Lancashire Lads, the small one at the end being an eleven-year old Charlie Chaplin. Colonel Gouraud arranged a reception at the Savoy Hotel immediately after the relief of Mafeking, where several well-known people recorded their voices.

After my experience with Colonel Gouraud and the Shorts, I moved to Napier's at Acton, famous for their motor and aircraft engines, etc. Five or six years later I started my own motor and aircraft sheet-metal works at Kensington, from which I retired in the Thirties'.

p o s t s c r i p t by George Frow

Mr. Cox has had a full and interesting life and has been most helpful in preparing this article and allowing us to use items from his scrapbook. The aeronautical side is perhaps a little outside our scope but he has lively memories of ballooning days before the flying machine, and of the Short Brothers, who built the first one in this country. Of the three brothers, Oswald Short is still living in Surrey and is interested that his old friend has related his experiences to us.

The link between the talking machine and the aeronautical industry was provided by the private finance of Colonel Gouraud in an age when there were philanthropists and private inventors; taxation has all but killed both today.

To have started in a young industry as a young man is not the fortune of everybody and Mr. Cox has had his full share of adventure, added to being in a lucky position of meeting interesting people; as a contrast everything moves at such a fast pace today that similar experiences could not easily be repeated.

The original Auxetophone is still in working order at the Science Museum, London, and a £100 production model is at E.M.I.'s museum at Hayes. Mr. Cox possess the cabinet of a £120 carved oak model, minus works, made into a sideboard. No other survivors can be recalled although the writer has a soundbox which functions with the blowing action of a vacuum cleaner. (This soundbox is seen in one of our pictures). Gramophones with a similar action made their appearance in the Edwardian period. Two which come to mind are Gaydon's "Stentorphone" and one by Pathé and this system was used for many years where loud volume was required, either in the open air, or in large halls.

Edison and Colonel Gouraud

THE FIRST MEETING

(This is the reprint of a letter to the Editor of "THE TIMES" on Wednesday 21st. October, 1931, and we are grateful to the present Editor for permission to use it.)

Sir,

The death of Edison recalls his European representative, the late Colonel Gouraud, a picturesque and charming personality, who was in the eighties and nineties a prominent figure in London society. While Edison discovered that which to-day gives us many comforts, Gouraud may have been said to have discovered Edison under conditions that lacked every comfort.

It was during the war between the North and South when Edison was still a lad. The rival armies had gone into winter quarters on each side of the River Potomac, and only occasional raids from the Southerners enlivened the deadly monotony of months of inactivity in the snow and the frost of that hard winter.

Gouraud was a captain on the Staff, and one night, when headquarters could get no intelligent reply to their telegraph calls to one of the many posts down the line, Gouraud was sent off post-haste to see what had happened. He found all perfectly quiet up to the telegraph hut in question, but when he burst in there he saw a boy asleep under a rug in the corner of the hut and the telegraph instrument automatically ticking out "All's well". When roused and called upon to explain, Edison - for it was he - said he was tired of being wakened up every few hours only to have to make the same reply.

After the war Colonel Gouraud ran across him again, and on inquiring if he had continued on the same lines, Edison replied that he could talk along wire and be heard miles away, but that he had no money to develop the invention. Colonel Gouraud had many influential connections, so finances for development were never to worry Edison again.

Colonel Gouraud brought many of Edison's inventions to Europe. The first phonographic record (voice letter) to cross the ocean was from Edison to Colonel Gouraud, who eventually collected a unique library of voices of the most distinguished people of the day. He entertained lavishly, and all London flocked to his parties to hear the first talking machine - the Edison phonograph. The late Lady St. Helier describes in her Memoirs the most impressive occasion when the late Cardinal Vaughan, the late Duke of Norfolk, and many representatives of the great Catholic families of England, assembled at Colonel Gouraud's house to hear Cardinal Manning's "message to posterity" spoken on his death-bed - the first voice to be heard from the other side of the grave. It was sent to the Pope, and is now in the Vatican.

Colonel Gouraud was the head of an old French family, and a worthy representative of a long line of cavalry soldiers. He was one of the first to receive the U.S.A.'s highest award, having been decorated at the age of twenty with the Congressional Medal of Honour for "gallantry on the field of battle." He was proud to number among the members of a younger line of his family the Gouraud later to become one of the heroes of France in the Great War - to-day General Gouraud, Military Governor of Paris.

I am, &c,

An Old Friend of Colonel Gouraud.

O u r I l l u s t r a t i o n s

On the front of this magazine, Colonel Gouraud is seen in his uniform, proudly wearing his decoration. On page 30 we have some glimpses inside "Little Menlo". The top picture shows Colonel Gouraud recording a message. It is interesting to note the wet-cell battery which operated the motor of this 'electric' phonograph. The lower picture is of a recording session with Sir Henry Morton Stanley, the intrepid explorer who searched for Dr. Livingstone in Africa. Your Editor wonders if this was the historic occasion which produced the cylinder now transcribed on to the 'History Speaks' L.P. record. (May we at this juncture invite Mr. Walter Welch to write an article for THE HILLDALE NEWS describing the historic recordings deposited in the Edison Archives, there physical appearances, speeds at which recorded and any interesting 'chit-chat' which might be relevant ?) Alas, Gouraud's former home "Little Menlo" has been demolished, like so many another large house in its own grounds in towns, to make way for a more 'economic' use of the land. We are fortunate that George Frow and Ray Phillips paid a visit there just before the demolition began. The gateway is on page 31, somewhat marred by some chestnut-paling fence put across to keep out unwanted people as the house stood empty. On pages 34 and 51 are other views of "Little Menlo", one from the roadway and one from the garden. In the latter, the room to the right of the tower is that in which 'larger' recordings were made - as we see in the interior scene on page 55. We regret that this picture is not a decent shape, but it was taken from a positive glass slide upon which the mask had slipped and we dared not take it apart in case we stripped the emulsion from the glass. It shows Colonel Gouraud and his family recording a musical cylinder. (Some of the wooden balustrade of the balcony was 'rescued' from demolition by Ray Phillips !!). Page 32 reproduces a page from an H.M.V. catalogue (kindly loaned to us by Edward Broad) showing an Auxetophone, while opposite, on page 33, are some views of an Auxetophone soundbox. Note the fine brass comb inside. The soundbox required two 'tubes' on

In "THE TIMES" for Monday 19th. October, 1931 there appeared the obituary notice to Mr. Edison. In the pictorial section that day there appeared the picture which we reproduce on page 53. This is the occasion spoken of in the letter from the Friend of Colonel Gouraud. Its caption explains it. When writing to the Editor of "THE TIMES" we were informed that the original picture belonged in 1931 to a Mrs. Morton Lane. We wrote to the address at which she lived in 1931, but our letter was returned with the information that there is now 'no such number'. So we do not even know if the Good Lady is still alive We wondered what other interesting photographs she might possess. The upper picture on page 54 was published originally in "THE ILLUSTRATED MAIL" and shows the recording being made in the Savoy Hotel to be sent to Baden Powell, in 1900, upon the occasion of the relief of Mafeking. Several cylinders were made by distinguished people and sent together with a phonograph to South Africa. Mr. Charles Cox is the gentleman seen speaking into the mouthpiece, introducing the speakers. Some of the collecting-drums are seen as well as, faintly, a picture of Queen Victoria and to the left of the phonograph a picture of Baden Powell. The lower picture shows Colonel Gouraud on a visit to the Edison Laboratories. Gouraud is on the right. Also in the scene are Swan, Gower, Bell and Kreusi, (the latter died in 1899). Note that the cylinders upon the table are light-coloured. This slide was loaned by Mr. Cox, as were the pictures on the front page and the back, where we see a picture autographed by Mr. Edison and another, taken in Paris of Edison & Gouraud. The pictures on page 30 and 55 were taken from slides which came into the Society's possession recently. They are positives intended for 'magic lantern' projection. We are grateful to Mr. W. J. Adams, one of the Directors of our printers, for his patience and skill in pursuing the various stages to turn them into printing plates. Possibly some little definition was lost, but that was inevitable. However, we are privileged to publish this 'original' material. The pictures are arranged so that photos of similar texture are on the same sheet. For example, the front and back were sepia in the original; those from the slides dark and 'flat', etc

Members are referred to page 49 of the HILLANDALE NEWS of June, 1964, where George Frow wrote some notes on "Little Menlo", and to the back page of the issue for October, 1967 (No. 39) where Colonel Gouraud is seen recording with his family. The young lady on the left in that picture later became Mrs. Courtney Gayer who is mentioned in the article which follows.

 Extracted from "THE TIMES" of Friday, 23rd. October, 1931.

Phonograph Records After 40 years

A small gathering of personal friends of Mr. Edison and the late Colonel Gouraud assembled on Wednesday night at the home of Mrs. R. Courtenay Gayer, a daughter of Colonel Gouraud, to commemorate the passing of the great inventor. Colonel Gouraud, (as has been recalled in THE TIMES), introduced Edison's talking machines into England, and some of the original records brought by Colonel Gouraud were replayed on this occasion. The apparatus which he used is in the Edison Museum in America, but a contemporary instrument was lent for the occasion by the Gramophone Company (His Master's Voice) and two boxes

(continued on page 45)

of the original cylindrical phonograph records of yellow wax, which have been preserved in Colonel Gouraud's family, were opened.

Some of these appeared to have shrunk after forty years and it was impossible to hear the first record sent to England in 1888. Similar disappointment was experienced with records labelled as giving the voices of King Edward, Sir Henry Irving and the Speaker of the House of Commons, but a message from Cardinal Manning to the Duke of Norfolk came readily into contact with the stylus, and emitted sounds which were heard through the original earpiece very like a stethoscope. After this record had been played several times the stylus cleared away the dust and the sound greatly improved. It became possible to catch even the intonation of the speaker and the words were quite unmistakable. Part of Cardinal Manning's deathbed speech thanking Mr. Edison and Colonel Gouraud for the phonograph were also heard on another record, a duplicate of that sent to the Vatican, and a third of Cardinal Manning was also partially heard.

Another successful record was a quick march played by the band of the Royal Marines (Chatham Division) and several speech records were also partially heard, including one by H.M. Stanley to Colonel Gouraud before his marriage, and a recitation of "The Charge of the Light Brigade", by Tennyson. All the records improved in quality as they were played, and it is hoped by an adjustment of the machine to get results from some of the smaller records which could not be tried on Wednesday. Speakers on these include Queen Alexandra, Lord Salisbury, Cardinal Vaughan and Mr. Edison and Colonel Gouraud themselves.

Editor's note. Because the above article and the letter from the Friend of Colonel Gouraud both name Cardinal MANNING as the speaker on the cylinder, we wonder if the mention of Cardinal Newman under the picture on page 53 is inaccurate. However, both lived at the same time and could have both recorded. We wonder why, which ever Cardinal was heard by the gathering seen on page 53, the cylinder had to be brought from America. Both worked in the British Isles. Cardinal Manning was a Londoner and hardly worked anywhere else, being born on 15th. July, 1808 and died 14th. January, 1892, being buried under the High Altar in Westminster Cathedral. Cardinal Newman was born in London 21st. February, 1801 and died in Birmingham 11th. August, 1890. His life was spent mostly in Birmingham, with a spell in Dublin. Tennyson's cylinder has been preserved, as has one by Stanley . . . do the others exist?

--*-*-*

Zurich Exhibition

by W. Schenker

Just a brief report on my Exhibition in Zurich

From From 7th. June to the 10th. July I held an Historical Exposition of Phonographs and Gramophones 1890 - 1930 under the auspices of the Zurich County Council and its President.

The Representatives Room, sixteen tables, five glass display cabinets, 130 posters advertisements twice each week in the local papers and transport for my machines was all kindly donated by the Council administration. Two thousand catalogues of the exhibition were provided by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry.

Our member, Mr. Eugen Benz helped me to give a special clean to the machines to be shown.

I spent the whole time that the exhibition was open in the hall giving demonstrations on the most important machines, which aroused great interest. I should say that over two

thousand people visited the Exhibition. They were mostly Swiss, but there were also American, Swedish, Italian, Hungarian, Austrian and Japanese.

I had some information about our Society on display and hope that it will result in four new Members for us.

Some pictures of interesting phonographs on display at my exhibition will be seen illustrated in a later number of THE HILLDALE NEWS.

I M P O R T A N T A N N T Announcement

Following discussion at the July meeting of the Society in London, it was decided that commencing with the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 8th. October, 1968, that the London meetings of this Society, and its 'Headquarters' be held at 'The Bridge House', Borough Road, London S.E.1. A map of the area is circulated with this magazine to all Members in Europe. Those living elsewhere will be sent one on application to the Secretary.

London Meetings.

At the 'Horse and Groom', Curtain Road, London, E.C.2.

Tuesday, 10th. September. A programme of Blue Amberols by Mr. O. Waite.

At the 'Bridge House', Borough Road, London, S.E.1.

Tuesday, 8th. October. Annual General Meeting followed by a programme.

Tuesday, 12th. November Programme by Martin Smith.

The Directory of Members is being circulated in its new mammoth size to all Members during August. Because of its size all copies must be sent by seairail and should leave the Secretary by August 17th!

Postal Codes

Many countries of the world now include code numbers in the postal address, but we do not appear to have them all. Could you kindly send them? The British Isles is to be coded over the next couple of years. Please send them to us as they are allocated. Some are in use already, but we haven't received them from you all!!! Even London will get new codes!!

Some General Release Dates. by Gerry Annand

E d i s o n

Two-minute wax

1 - 7128 = 1896 to April 1899 (in 'blocks')	7129 - 7587 = May 1899 to Sept. 1900
7588 - 7983 = Oct. 1900 to Sept. 1901	7984 - 8314 = Oct. 1901 to Dec. 1902
8315 - 8723 = Jan. 1903 to Jan. 1904	8724 - 9050 = July 1904 to July 1905
9051 - 9313 = Aug. 1905 to July 1906	9314 - 9601 = Aug. 1906 to July 1907
9602 - 9889 = Aug. 1907 to July 1908	9890 - 10176 = Aug. 1908 to July 1909
10177 - 10394 = Aug. 1909 to July 1910	10395 - 10505 = Aug. 1910 to July 1911
10506 - 10575 = Aug. 1911 to Sept. 1912	

Four-minute wax Amberol

1 - 60 = Nov. 1908 to Dec. 1908	61 - 324 = Jan. 1909 to Dec. 1909
325 - 578 = Jan. 1910 to Dec. 1910	579 - 864 = Jan. 1911 to Dec. 1911
865 - 1149 = Jan. 1912 to Oct. 1912	

Blue Amberol

1501-1710 Oct. 1912 to April 1913	1711 - 2251 May 1913 to Oct. 1914
2252 - 2584 Nov. 1914 to April 1915	2585 - 2844 May 1915 to March 1916
2845 - 3064 April 1916 to Jan. 1917	3065 - 3822 Feb. 1917 to Sept. 1919
3823 - 4184 Oct. 1919 to March 1921	4185 - 4756 April 1921 to Aug. 1923
4757 - 5343 Sept. 1923 to May 1927	5344 - 5518 June 1927 to May 1928
5519 - 5719 June 1928 to May 1929	

Note: Release dates are no positive clue to recording dates, particularly Blue Amberols which also included reissues from 4-minute wax cylinders, and later, from Edison Diamond Discs.

Marshall Wilder

by Peter Betz

Marshall Pinckney Wilder was an anachronism in his time, in the sense that he was a hunched-back dwarf who succeeded in an era when such a creature was neither expected nor encouraged to come out of doors in the daylight.

As a boy he managed, as he says in one of his books, to always find something laughable about life besides himself, and he realised at an early age that he did indeed possess the talent to make others laugh - with him instead of at him.

As an adult, Wilder became one of the most successful of a group known collectively as "drawing-room entertainers", both in England and America. Born in Geneva, New York, on 19th. September, 1859 and raised in Hartford, Connecticut, he began his career giving 'entertainments' in competition with neighbourhood children in an alley they had fixed over into a small open-air theatre. Earliest official mention of him has him giving a humorous talk at the DeKalb Avenue Methodist Church in New York on 4th. April, 1881.¹

To quote the New York Times obituary of 11th. January, 1915, "owing to his great

physical disability, he received little education as a boy, his school days being limited to a few terms in the public schools of Hartford. He became a stenographer until, at the age of twenty he entered the theatrical business."²

Of interest to British members, "when he was twenty-five, in 1884, Wilder went to London and appeared before the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII). From that year he made sixteen trips to London, and was always asked to appear before the Prince/King"³

As well as a showman, Wilder was a prolific writer. The first fruits of his association with the well-known people of his day came in 1889, entitled, "People I've Smiled With: Recollections of a Merry Little Life". (Published Cassell & Co, New York, 1889. 286 pp.) During 1904-05, he went on a world tour, the result of which was a second book, "Smiling Round the World". (Published Funk and Wagnalls, New York and London, 1908, 330 pp.). A third book, "The Sunny Side of the Street", (Published Funk and Wagnalls, New York and London, 1905 359 pp.), was little more than an updating of the first, with added photos and new material. As an editor, Marshall Wilder edited a set of volumes called "The Ten Books of the Merry Makers", (Published Circle Publishing Co., New York, 1909, 10 volumes), which I have not seen but which is described as a collection of humorous pieces by the well-known wits of the day. Despite his physical condition, Wilder was married on 25th. June, 1903, to a Miss Sophia C. Hanks, daughter of a New York doctor.⁴ (Wilder's father was also a doctor who lived to be around ninety years old.) The couple had two children, born in 1905 and 1906. Mrs. Wilder died about a year before her husband.⁵

As a recording artist, Wilder made few records. There were two Edison Wax Amberols, made in 1908. viz. 54 "A few Short Stories"

57 "Stories about the Baby"

If there were others made for other Companies, I should appreciate being told about them. Although well-known in the principal cities, Marshall Wilder does not seem to have been equally well-known on a national basis, in the sense, say, that George Cohan or Eddie Foy were known. Thus one would find a better chance, I should say, of finding them in the large city shops as opposed to the countryside areas.

Additionally, I have a very early, short, dark brown wax cylinder, perhaps a 'New Jersey' entitled, "A short sketch on Railroads." This is an extremely fine monologue in which Wilder compares the various types of snoring passengers to different train noises. I consider it one of the prizes of my collection.

Wilder's demise was due to a heart attack, brought on by a two week bout with pneumonia, during a vaudeville tour. His death on 10th. January, 1915, in a hotel in Saint Paul, Minnesota, brought to a close the career of an individual who had successfully moved from the drawing room into vaudeville and, at the age of fifty-five, had certainly accomplished much, despite his physical difficulties.

Footnotes. 1. George Odell, "History of the New York Stage", New York, Columbia University Press, 1939. Vol. II (1879 - 82), p. 407.

2. & 3. Obituary, New York Times, 11 Jan,

4. New York Times, 25th. July, 1903.

5. ditto

1915

PETS CORNER Husband, returning home at 3 a.m. and finding wife at the door with a rolling pin - "Hullo! Mary, Baking?"

Reviewed by Ernie Bayly

Volume One, Side One. Gems from the Edison Diamond Amberols (showing original numbers)

- a. Melita Heim, soprano, "Voce di Primavera (28149) released 1913
- b. Alessandro Bonci, tenor, Rigoletto: "Questa o quella" & "La donna e mobile" (29001) r. 1913
- c. Marie Rappold, soprano, Lohengrin: "Elsa's Traum" (28187) released originally wax Amberol 1910
- d. Paul Payan, bass, "Le Cor" (27041) released on wax Amberol 1910
- e. Marie Delna, contralto, Prophete: "Ah, mon fils!" (28126) released on wax Amberol 1910
- f. Maria Galvany, soprano, La Sonnambula: "Come per me sereno" (28123) recorded prior to 1910

Side Two. Classical Gems from the Edison Discs

- a. Celestine Boninsegna, soprano, Forza del Destino: "Pace, mio Dio", never previously issued
- b. Giuseppe Anselmi, tenor, Pescatori di perle, "Mi par d'udir ancora" never previously issued
- c. Carolina Lazzari, contralto, Samson et Dalila, "Mon coeur s'ouvre.." (83079) recorded 1918
- d. Lucrezia Bori, soprano, Don Pasquale, "So anch'io la virtu magica" (83003) recorded 1913
- e. Giovanni Martinelli, tenor, Pagliacci, "Vesti la giubba", recorded 1929, never previously issued.
- b. Moriz Rosenthal, piano, Chopin, Nocturne, op. 9, no. 2, in E flat, recorded 1929
never previously issued.

Volume Two, Side One. Ragtime from the Edison Blue Amberol Cylinders.

- a. Peerless Quartet, "Those Ragtime Melodies" (2079) released 1913
- b. Collins and Harlan, "When the midnight choo-choo leaves for Alabam" (1719) r. 1912
- c. New York Military Band, "The Hungarian Rag" (2089) released 1913
- d. Anna Chandler, soprano, "You Made Me Love You" (1931) recorded 16th, June, 1913
- e. Fred van Eps, banjo, "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (1864) released 1912
- f. Billy Murray, tenor, "The International Rag" (2078) released 1913

Side Two. Dance Music from the Edison Discs of the Twenties. (all foxtrots)

- a. The Aristocrats, "Egyptian Echoes" (51539) recorded 1925
- b. Phil Napoleon Orchestra, "Five Pennies" (52147) recorded 1927
- c. Golden Gate Orchestra, "Get out and get under the moon" (52416) recorded 1928
- d. Yale Collegians, "You'll do it someday" (52108) recorded 1927
- e. Californian Ramblers, "Chinese Jumble" recorded 1928, never previously issued.
- f. Oreste & his Queensland Orchestra, with vocal chorus by Vaughn de Leath (1927) rec. 1927

While reviewing these records I shall assume that you like all of the music upon them, for I feel it more important to speak about them qualitatively from a technical point of view rather than try to convince you that this or that 'piece' is musically good.

Many owners of Edison phonographs did not always pay sufficient attention to their maintenance, especially after the passage of around half-a-century, and so did not hear their records to best advantage. Also, with the improvement of electrical amplifiers after World War II, collectors of 'Edisonia' wondered what electrical reproduction had to offer. In Britain the late Adrian Sykes worked hard to produce his moving iron 'Electrograph' cylinder pickup, while the late 'Billy' Clarke produced a pickup using 'bender-rochelle' crystals. I thought of these two gentlemen when I put these two records on the turntable. I thought also of George Blacker who helped 'Folkways Records' produce L.P.'s from cylinders. modestly, my own efforts with an adapted Acos crystal stereo cartridge to play mono, Kevin Daly's modified Decca Deram cartridge . . . then reproducing vertically-cut discs John Freestone sent me a very nice tape . . . Pathé records of France re-issued some very early

discs of the veteran Aristide Bruant quite successfully and Vegas likewise with some early songs by Mistinguett. But Walter Welch has all of these efforts knocked into the proverbial 'Cocked Hat' Naturally, I started with item one of volume one . . . what a fine choice to use to commence the series! It sparkles. Alessandro Bonci follows in fine form. The next four from cylinders haven't quite the same quality of tone, no doubt because they were from the earlier efforts of recording four minute wax cylinders. Do not misconstrue my reference here, for all of the recordings listed here is as near perfect reproduction as we are likely to hear. It is a pleasure to hear. It reveals too that Edison's recording on cylinders was in advance of other contemporary methods. Now jump on to the Martinelli recorded in 1929. Although there are no notes with these records, it is obvious from the tone that this must be a "needle-cut" (lateral-cut). It is electrically recorded. It has a quality in advance of other discs of that time. Just listen to the clarity of the "Ha, ha, ha" phrase in particular. I never heard any other 1929 with such natural aspiration of the 'h'. A good test for recording and reproduction. Like wise the Rosenthal, taken from a metal 'mother' is well recorded. Passing to the second record of 'popular' songs and music, I would have wished to hear a British voice somewhere, say, Harry Lauder or Billy Williams with their excellent diction, as a 'yardstick' by which to measure recording and reproduction. Perhaps that is carping, for we have Anna Chandler who is very clear, not that Collins, Harlan, Murray are poor, but I live in Britain and naturally am most used to its accents. Now sit back . . . wherever did you hear a recorded banjo ring out so sparkingly as this of Fred van Eps? Marvellous original, marvellous reproduction. From the test pressing of the Californian Ramblers comes a nice 'hot' tune, clear in the recording. Was this a needle-cut? Overall, I feel that the dance bands from diamond discs were not so successful a form of recording in the original as the cylinders.

These two records cost \$5 each. That means you will have to spend ten dollars, whatever your taste in music, for you must hear this milestone in reproduction from Edison originals. They are available from THE THOMAS ALVA EDISON FOUNDATION, 2000, 2nd Avenue Detroit, Michigan 48226, U.S.A. Members in Great Britain may remit this money easily by means of a "Mail Transfer" through their own Banks.

THUMB NAIL SKETCHES No. 36. by TYN PHOIL

"Tannhauser March" played by, a) Edison Concert Band cond. Frederick W. Ecke
Edison Blue Amberol 2529 b) Caesar Sodero and his Band

On 11th. June, 1968, the President gave one of his excellent recitals and opened with two anomalies; i.e., two recordings on each of the numbers 1560 and 2529.

He explained that the second recording on 1560, "The Preacher and the Bear" was taken from the Edison disc 50520, but had no knowledge as to how the Sodero recording came on to 2529. I can put his mind at rest.

In 1913, soon after the introduction of the Edison discs, Caesar Sodero was appointed musical director in place of Victor Herbert, whose increasing outside commitments made it impossible for him to remain in one place. Sodero was pleased with the Edison Concert Band recording of the "Tannhauser March" and thought it would be a good subject for the Edison disc. It transpired to be a surprisingly good disc and was numbered 50150 (matrix 2516).

It was decided to give the cylinder clientele the benefit of this recording, and as the Company had not then formulated a numbering scheme for transferring from disc to cylinder, this was given the same number as the existing cylinder of that march.

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write: Lawrence A. Schlick

Worthington, Minnesota U.S.A 56187



A DISTINGUISHED GATHERING in the early nineties at Colonel Gouraud's flat in Whitehall, listening to the phonographic record of Cardinal Newman's voice brought over from America by Colonel Gouraud. Seated near the instrument is Lady Herbert of Lee, and immediately behind her is Lady Jeune (Lady St. Helier). On the extreme right is the Duchess of Teck, and other distinguished people in the assembly are Lord Aberdeen, Sir H. M. Stanley, Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, Sir Charles Russell (Lord Russell of Killowen), and Cardinal Vaughan. The bust in the centre is that of Edison.





